



Complete Poems

C.P. Cavafy

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No modern poet so vividly brought to life the history and culture of Mediterranean antiquity; no writer dared break, with such taut energy, the early-twentieth-century taboos surrounding homoerotic desire; no poet before or since has so gracefully melded elegy and irony as the Alexandrian Greek poet Constantine Cavafy (1863–1933). Whether advising Odysseus on his return to Ithaca or confronting the poet with the ghosts of his youth, these verses brilliantly make the historical personal—and vice versa. To his profound exploration of longing and loneliness, fate and loss, memory and identity, Cavafy brings the historian's assessing eye along with the poet's compassionate heart.

After more than a decade of work and study, Mendelsohn—a classicist who alone among Cavafy's translators shares the poet's deep intimacy with the ancient world—gives readers full access to the genius of Cavafy's verse: the sensuous rhymes, rich assonances, and strong rhythms of the original Greek that have eluded previous translators. Complete with the Unfinished Poems that Cavafy left in drafts when he died—a remarkable, hitherto unknown discovery that remained in the Cavafy Archive in Athens for decades—and with an in-depth introduction and a helpful commentary that situates each work in a rich historical, literary, and biographical context, this revelatory translation is a cause for celebration: the definitive presentation of Cavafy in English.

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